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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 002654

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AMGT](#) [KREC](#) [CVIS](#) [ADPM](#) [CH](#) [FR](#) [GM](#) [JA](#) [UK](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH DEMARCHE ON CHINA POUCH ISSUE

REF: A. BEIJING 5539

[1](#)B. BEIJING 3477

[1](#)C. BEIJING 1789

[1](#)D. BEIJING 4680

[1](#)E. BEIJING 3012

[1](#)F. BEIJING 2539

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. SEE PARAS 6 & 7.

[1](#)2. (SBU) French A/S-equivalent for Asia Herve Ladsous called in U.S. and UK Embassy representatives April 19 to share French thinking on next steps in dealing with the Beijing pouch problems. Political and Tri-Mission Management M-Cs attended for the U.S., along with First Secretary Tom Fletcher for the UK. Ladsous was joined by DAS Jean-Noel Poirier and a representative from French customs.

[1](#)3. (C) Ladsous stated that his purpose was to inform the USG and HMG that Mr. Sillard, the Deputy Director for the Pouch, French Customs, would travel to Beijing, arriving May 1. Sillard would be bringing in a diplomatic pouch, in an attempt to return to the status quo ante Chinese treatment of accompanied pouch items contained in the hold of the aircraft. He would seek to have immediate access, not by having direct access to the hold, but rather by having the pouch treated as priority luggage. His goal would be to have the pouch put on the first transport vehicle from the hold to the baggage carousel. The French hoped that success would establish a precedent, allowing them to restore regular accompanied (in the hold) pouch traffic. The MFA would inform the U.S. and UK embassies of the result of their experiment. Ladsous said he would call another trilateral meeting thereafter to consider follow-on handling of the issue. (Comment: During the course of the discussion, Ladsous reminded us that at Dulles, the USG does not/not allow tarmac access. Ladsous did not ask, and Minister-Counselors -- lacking sufficient background and instructions -- did not comment on, whether the potential solution being tested by the GOF would also be acceptable to the U.S. End comment.)

[1](#)4. (C) Ladsous specified that the French effort would be undertaken in the hope that the joint letter from the Secretary and the French and British FMs will lead to greater

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flexibility on the part of the Chinese. His understanding was that the letter had taken Beijing by surprise, raising the consciousness of at least some as to the seriousness of the problem.

[1](#)5. (C) Ladsous said that, whatever the outcome on May 1, the GOF would like to reach a common approach with the U.S. and UK on a related issue, the use of diplomatic cargo planes that will be needed in connection with the construction of France's new Beijing embassy. This, he said, was a matter presumably of equal interest to the U.S.

[1](#)6. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Ladsous asked that we let our Embassy know that Sillard would like to meet, separately or in a trilateral format, with appropriate U.S. and UK officials while in Beijing May 1. Embassy Beijing may wish to be in touch with French and UK embassies.

[1](#)7. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Embassy would appreciate background and guidance on diplomatic pouch and cargo aircraft issues raised by the GOF.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

Stapleton